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Land Use Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 18, 2011

Offices of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP)

Cook County Conference Room

Suite 800, 233 S. Wacker Drive, Willis Tower, Chicago, Illinois

Members Present:

Mark Avery (chair), Robert Cole, Roger Dahlstrom, Kristi DeLaurentiis, Kimberly Flom, David Husemoller, Jim LaBelle, Steve Lazzara (for Curt Paddock), Courtney Owen (for Jeromie Winsor), Robert Palmer, Arnold Randall, Heather Tabbert, Norm West

Members Absent:

Judy Beck, Lisa DiChiera, David Galowich, Ed Paesel (co-chair), Dennis Sandquist, Heather Smith, Nathaniel Werner, Nancy Williamson

Staff Present:

Stephen Ostrander (committee liaison), Bob Dean, Trevor Dick, Jon Hallas, Kristin Ihnchak, Ricardo Lopez, Jason Navota, Rosa Ortiz, Samyukth Shenbaga, Pete Saunders, Nicole Woods

Others Present:

Kevin Pack (UIC intern with Robert Palmer), Ryan Richter (Metra), Mike Walczak (NWMC)

1.0 Call to Order

Chair Mark Avery called the meeting to order at 9:11 a.m.

2.0 Agenda Changes and Announcements

There were no agenda changes.

3.0 Approval of Meeting Notes

A motion to approve the minutes of March 16, 2011, was made by Rob Cole and seconded by Heather Tabbert. All in favor, the motion carried.

4.0 CMAP Planning Commissioner Workshops – Jon Hallas, CMAP

After a brief overview of recent Planning Commissioner Workshops, Jon led a discussion with committee members about how CMAP can make future workshops more effective, useful, and relevant for participants. A total of 9 workshops are expected this year.

Steve Lazzara asked whether there was any possibility of CMAP collaborating in the future with the similar training program provided by the Illinois Chapter of the American Planning Association. Jon answered that the expectation is that CMAP will do this, with the APA focusing more on planning issues of a more specific nature (perhaps tailored to the interests of participants at a given workshop).

Kimberly Flom reported that two planning commissioners from Orland Park had attended a workshop recently, and had "nothing but good things to say." She added that perhaps local municipal staff could be trained to give brief presentations on GO TO 2040 to planning commissioners (at regular meetings). It would help if CMAP could provide slides or a short presentation on GO TO 2040 that could be used by municipal staff for this purpose. Mark Avery agreed, and stated that since it can be difficult to get planning commissioners who may have attended a CMAP workshop in past years, this approach might effectively bring them up-to-date on the GO TO 2040 plan and related matters.

Kristi DeLaurentiis said that there is a need to reaffirm (and get the word out) that new planning commissioner workshops have new content and elements.

Norm West suggested that it might be a good idea to try to recruit participants at the time of significant turnover in plan commissions.

David Husemoller observed that sometimes it is difficult for participants to attend both sessions of the two-day format workshops.

Rob Cole noted that it is important to explain how local regulations (zoning, etc.) might block implementation of GO TO 2040 recommendations.

Jim LaBelle asked how many planning commissioners were paid for their service. Several committee members responded that few, if any, are.

Courtney Owen told the committee that Michael Blue is the new head of APA Illinois's training program, and the long-term goal is to make training required of planning commissioners in the state, and suggested that perhaps CMAP could also get behind this. Jon Hallas noted New Jersey has a similar requirement in place. Rob Cole said that given the often-severe budget restraints faced by many municipalities, a legislative mandate of this sort might encounter significant resistance. One possible alternative would be to create an efficient, easy-to-use online training system.

Jim LaBelle observed that it could make sense to expand workshops and similar training to elected officials.

5.0 CMAP FY2012 Work Plan Item: Preparation of Model Plans, Ordinances, and Codes – Bob Dean

Mark Avery introduced this topic, recalling past committee discussions about model ordinances and codes during the development of GO TO 2040. Bob Dean proceeded to give an overview, based upon the memorandum distributed to committee members in advance of the meeting.

Jim LaBelle asked whether local food model ordinances could include controversial issues such as residents keeping chickens on their property. Bob answered that this was a possibility, but underscored that CMAP would create model ordinances that could be easily tailored to local context, and that mostly, it would concern goals such as the creation of gardens in vacant lots.

Roger Dahlstrom asked for some clarification on CMAP's approach to model ordinances for parking management. Bob responded that CMAP is looking at a wide variety of strategies, such as those of Donald Shoup (an expert on parking strategies who teaches in the urban planning program at UCLA).

Kristi asked whether CMAP will be integrating LEED-ND into sustainability plan work. Bob answered yes, and mentioned that Doug Farr had advocated on behalf of this in several conversations with him. Kristi added that there is a further need to expand consideration to multimodal transportation, etc.

Norm West observed that while the focus has often been on the creation and preservation of individual parks and areas of open space, there is a need going forward to focus more on wide swaths of land, especially in outlying areas. Bob responded that CMAP will be building on the good model ordinance work done in the past by the Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC), as well as continuing its ongoing work on the Green Infrastructure Vision.

Norm West mentioned that with climate change, heat exhaustion is emerging as a public health issue.

Heather Tabbert noted that the RTA has been developing strategies for parking in TOD areas, highlighting best practices, for elected officials.

David Husemoller suggested that a clearinghouse of "cherry picked" ordinances (demonstrating best practices) would be very helpful. He added that Lake County's wind energy model ordinance might be a good model, especially as it was developed in a manner so that it can be tailored to local context.

Bob Palmer agreed that it would be good to highlight examples beyond CMAP's own model ordinance. He added that Hazel Crest would benefit from a parking model ordinance, as it manages a significant amount of commuter parking.

Kimberly Flom mentioned that Orland Park also has a wind energy ordinance. She also liked the idea of parking model ordinances, and would like to see this for form-based codes, especial-

ly in helping municipalities determine how to evaluate their own community. She added that public health is a topic that could fit into some of these model ordinances (Bob responded that CMAP may include public health impact studies). Kimberly suggested that public-private partnerships would be an important topic to provide guidance; Bob responded that that may be a good idea, but given CMAP's relative unfamiliarity with development finance, the agency would proceed with caution.

Rob Cole suggested that perhaps Metropolitan Planning Organizations across the county could participate together in listservs, getting examples from across the country, as they are being developed (rather than much later, as is usually the case with best practice case studies, etc.). Rob added that, regarding public private partnerships, some municipalities would probably be very unprepared for the negotiation process inherent in those partnerships, and would have a difficult time getting the best deal for their community.

Kimberly agreed that this would be a concern, but said that there is a vacuum for information on public-private partnerships for communities that are interested. (Several committee members agreed that it was important that there be "no advocacy" on this topic).

Jim LaBelle stated that he thought that it was worthwhile to "go through the discipline" to actually write the model ordinance, and it is especially important to look at local cost concerns—i.e. "how it adds up," and "are we saving money?"—because that it how local communities approach these questions. Jim added that there is a real need to look at better approaches to the large parking requirements—and currently large parking lots—of Metra, especially farther out in our region (Heather Tabbert later responded that if there is an interest in having the RTA tackling this issue, they could look into it).

Roger Dahlstrom said that there is some evidence from studies that strategies such as conservation design can be helpful. He added (referencing back to the discussion about public-private partnerships and related issues) that some municipalities "get into trouble" with financial software.

Kristi said that it would still be good to offer details on very successful public private partnerships, to serve as examples rather than direct guidance.

Rob Cole noted that Oak Park has been looking at parking pricing strategies (e.g. raising cost in high turnover retail areas, lowering near CTA Green Line stations to encourage transit use). Arnold Randall asked Rob whether Oak Park encourages other commuting options, to which Rob responded that Oak Park has also focused on such things as bicycle parking.

6.0 Local Technical Assistance Program: Park Forest – Kristin Ihnchak

Kristin provided an overview of the LTA project in Park Forest, focusing on the more general question of what will—and should—be in the sustainability plans that CMAP will be developing with several individual communities over the coming years. (Her PowerPoint presentation

can be accessed online here.)

Rob Cole said that it is important to include accessibility in the transportation and mobility section of the proposed sustainability plan.

Kristi asked whether there was any consideration of aging infrastructure. Kristin responded that CMAP will be recommending that all communities undertaking a sustainability plan also do a capital improvement plan.

Jim LaBelle asked whether CMAP had data for all categories being considered. Bob Dean responded that CMAP has many, but not all.

Rosa Ortiz noted that Park Forest already has been implementing retrofit and adaptive reuse, in line with the goals of a sustainability plan (e.g. its new fire station, with its old fire station becoming the police station)

Norm West said that it would be good to include some sense of land value in study area.

Jim LaBelle said that sidewalks should be addressed. Kristin responded that this will be included in the transportation and mobility section of the plan.

Roger Dahlstrom noted that ITE has good materials that might be applicable to pedestrian concerns, in that it addresses mixed use.

Jim LaBelle asked whether CMAP would be studying what neighboring communities are doing relevant to a given municipality's sustainability plan. Rosa responded that this was being done for all LTA projects.

Kristi said that it would also be important to consider how many students are walking to school versus using other means.

7.0 Next Meeting: June 15, 2011

Stephen Ostrander mentioned that he would attending a memorial service in California at the time of the June meeting, but he would arrange the meeting and have a colleague attend the meeting and take minutes in his absence.

9.0 Other Business

Heather Tabbert gave a brief update on its funding programs.

Mark Avery mentioned that there were meetings taking place throughout the region on the issue of the end of free transit rides for seniors.

New committee member representing Cook County Arnold Randall (General Superintendent, Cook County Forest Preserve District) introduced himself.

Kristi gave a brief update on legislative activities of MPC, including a bill concerning public-private partnerships.

10.0 Public Comment

None

11.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:06 am

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Ostrander

Staff Liaison to the Land Use Committee